



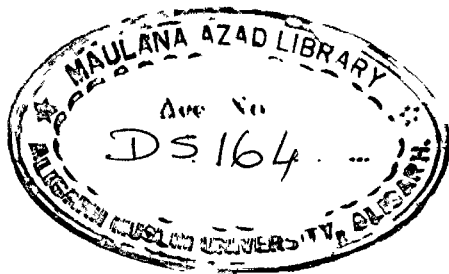
SUPERSTITIONS
A STUDY BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH
TWENTY WOMEN OF ALIGARH NEAR AND
ABOVE THE AGE OF SIXTY

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SUPERSTITIONS -- A study based on interviews with
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CHAPTER- I.

INTRODUCTION

Superstitions have been a part and parcel of human existence. Whether one takes a traditional society or quite a modern one, the superstitions seem to be present in both although in the modern societies they may appear in different garbs. A few considerations should be brought to light at the very out set of this brief and modest study

1. The sources of the superstitions are mostly located in the habits of thought common in both the primitive and the ancient civilizations.

2. As civilization advanced, there came about great revolutions in the conscious thought and behaviour of mankind but the superstitions being more a furniture of the unconscious continued to either lie hidden beneath the surface of consciousness or survived overtly in association in the certain religious rites and ceremonies.

3. In the primitive as well as in the ancient cultures superstitions seem to either accompany magic, or were an off-shoot of the latter.

4. In advanced civilizations superstitions appear more forcefully during periods of high group tension, crisis and calamity.

5. There seems to be very close relationship between fears and hopes, such fears and hopes as are related to the great events of life, and superstitions.

6. It is however true that superstitions are not uniformly distributed in society. Women may be more superstitious than men; older women, more than the young women; children are prone to acquire superstition more than adults; low economic level may be associated with high superstition level or more educational level, in the low superstition level. It is not necessary that those who are economically well off and educated might be free from superstition.

7. Five great processes that liberated mankind from most of its superstitions: They were: a) World Religions, (b) Reflective and Analytical Philosophy, both metaphysical and Rational, (c) Industrial Revolution (d) Liberal Education, and (e) Modern science.

8. The fact that superstition persisted even after the revolutions in thought and technology makes us entertain the thesis hypothetically that neither rationalism nor empiricism nor and neither changes in the way and the techniques of knowledge nor in the modes of production necessarily amount to the disappearance of superstitions.

9. A study of superstition is greatly enriched by the modern studies in primitive anthropology and psychology.

Let us refer to a few studies in this field and allied with it. As we survey the literature, we are struck by the

fact that London, of all cities in the West, is most pre-occupied with the problem of superstitions.

The study of the primitive customs and practices led the researches in the field of superstitions G. Turner: Samoa a Hundred years ago and long before (1884), J. Thomson: Through Masai Land (1887), S.L. and H. Hinde: The last of the Masai (1901), W.W. Skeat and C.O. Blegden: Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula (1906), R.E. Donnett's "At the Back of Black Man's Mind" (1906), W.G.W. Martin: Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland (1902), J.L. Burkhordt: Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys (1830), and E. Shorthand's Maori Religion and Mythology. In this connection, Dawson's 'Austrian Aborigines' is also a worth-noting work.

The studies on ancient civilizations were the second great spur to the researches in the field of mysterious custom and superstitions. These include J. Grimm's Teutonic mythology W. Crookes: The popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India, F. Ratzel's: The History of Mankind and the recent researches on Ancient Egypt, India and West Asia.

The early anthropological works which paid considerable attention to superstition were Westermarck's, 'The origin and the Development of the Moral Ideas' and W.H.R. Rivers. The Todas, and R. Taylor's 'Te Ika a Mavi', R.H. Codrington: The Melanesians. In recent anthropological works, the emphasis is more on social structure. The late nineteenth century interest in superstition needs to be revived.

The ancient philosophical and scriptural references to

superstitions are so vast that we can only state a few of them
~~Genesis XI viii 17; Mathew XIX. 13; Talmud; Zeraim; Berakhoth.~~
 19a, 56a; Zend Avesta; Sirozah, 1. 30; Plato, Laws, IX, 881;
 Proverbs xx 7; Aeschylus: Eumerides; Herodolus, VI. 86;
 Plutarch vita crassi, 16; Homer, odyssey, xvii. 475; and
 Polybius, iii. 25.

But more than any other scholar, Sir J.G.Frazer and
 Sir E.B. Tylor were mostly responsible in giving a great lead
 in the study of myths, legends and superstitions. Without
 them, the study of this fascinating subject could not have
 developed.

CHAPTER- II.

In order to gather superstitions prevalent in Aligarh it was decided to restrict this inquiry to only one group, namely, of aged women who have already crossed their sixty years. Such a restriction assumed that the superstitions are mostly distributed by old women in the Indian society. They include the following types: the grandmother, the old maid-servants, and the old female dependants in feudal households. If three types are the possessors and the dispersers of superstitions in society, then the ^{social} solid institutions which support three types must be favourable to the life of the superstition in society. Such social institutions even joint family and feudal households wherein the presence of old women, relatives dependents, or servants, provided a great opportunity for the children and the young of the families to learn superstitions. As the joint families disappeared and the feudal households broke down, the old type (the grandmother, the grand old maid servant, and the old women dependants which used to flock inside the old feudal houses) also disappeared.

Hence, this study is based on two assumptions (which could be a set of very significant hypotheses for further study) that (a) as the institutions of feudal households and joint families disappear and break down, less are the superstitions current in society, and (b) superstition is learnt unconsciously during childhood and early youth. The sample of the present study being of women who are about 60 years will then imply

that the superstition they narrated were learnt by them when they were young. The superstitions we recorded nor must then be widely prevalent in about 1930 and 1935, when the old women of our sample must have been about 20 years old. Most of the old women interviewed for this study belong to a lower economic level. This again brings to light another possibility that superstitions move from lower to higher strata society. The movement upward is however resisted by the greater degree of rationality, education, and sophistication possessed by more educated and richer classes in society.

The superstitions gathered through interviews are presented in the following chapter under different categories. This is a simple classification. In the fourth chapter we restate these superstitions under three further categories. These categories are the hidden laws on which superstitions are made to operate. The first law is that of 'like attracts like.' A thing or a word, or event demands for its repetition, reflection, and duplication. Most superstitions are based on this law. The psychology of cursing and blessing as described by Ernest Crawley in his book "Oath, curse, and Blessing" rest on this law. The second law which is the reverse of the first is the attraction of the opposites -- a thing, a word, or an event asks for its direct or indirect opposite, thereby implying that the opposites are also mutually attractive. There two symmetries constitute the structure of superstitions. But there are those who do not reflect either of these two laws are classified under 'arbitrary'. This arbitrariness is relative. It may

be a curtain ~~drawn~~ drawn over the face of a new and unknown symmetry.

This study does not attempt at interpreting the superstitions. The causal link between the 'likes and the 'opposite is neither manifest nor necessary. There might be a symbolic association where explanation will require an extensive exploitation of psychological and sociological data. This is beyond the scope of this limited project.

The last chapter will however note a ^{few} ~~four~~ significant aspects of the general character of the superstitions recorded here.

CHAPTER - 3

Superstitions classified under simple Categories.

SNAKES

1. The snake never bites a pregnant woman, it is believed.
2. Instead of killing a black snake it is given milk and worshiped, because people believe that some diety comes in the form of snake.
3. A pregnant woman should not kill a snake.
4. One member of a pair of snakes should not be killed, the other member will take the revenge.
5. In very old houses snakes used to live, one should not kill those snakes, because it is believed that these are the sprits of the ancesstors.

PARTS OF THE BODY (Nails, Hairs)

6. One should not cut the nails at night and the cut nails should be burried deep away from the house.
7. One should not pray with open and uncovered hairs.
8. One should not see the other person with one eye otherwise both of them will have quarrel.
9. The girls should spit on their cut nails and hairs to make them dirty, and it is believed that they become useless for magic.

WASHERMAN

10 If the washerman comes in the morning it is a bad omen.
One won't get the food whole the day.

ITCHING & SPITTING ETC SNEEZING.

- 11. If the left palm of a women itches, she will gain money.
- 12. Batting of the right eye is a bad sign.
- 13. Sneezing at the start of any work is a bad sign.
- 14. When a person spits at another he takes over the other's sins.
- 15. To sneeze three times in rapid succession is considered a good omen.
- 16. The itching of the palm is considered an indication that the person will get some unexpected money.

METALS

- 17. A girl during her marriage ceremonies should keep an iron knife. It is believed that she will remain out of danger.
- 18. The girl has wear some iron ornament no evil will come to her.

PREGNANCY

19. If a frog jumped over the womb of a pregnant woman, it is said that child will be pale and unhealthy.
20. A pregnant woman is not allowed to go to a house where death has occurred.
21. A pregnant woman should not wear flowers as it is believed that ghosts and demons will come to her.
22. An expectant mother is not allowed to go to a house where a child has been delivered recently.
23. An expectant woman is not allowed to go out after dark as it is believed that the ghosts might be lurking around.
24. During the first pregnancy the woman is not allowed to visit a widow's house.
25. While it is Solar or lunar eclipse, a pregnant woman should not cut, sleep, stitch or cook any thing. And she must have a bath just after the eclipse.
26. During eclipse the corner of a cloth of the expectant woman is dyed in red ochre. It is a sign of protection.
27. If a black thread is tied around the waist of an expectant woman it is believed that son will be born to her.
28. A pregnant woman should not travel by boat or to cross a river.
29. A pregnant woman should not kill a snake.
30. Special care is taken for the clothes, nails and hairs of an expectant woman during her first pregnancy.

MARRIAGE

31. If an accident happens at the time of marriage, that marriage is considered to be unsuccessful.
32. Giving a fish to the bride when she comes first time to her husband's home is a good sign.
33. Bride is allowed to see her husband on the next day of marriage. And it is believed that if she met her husband on the same day her husband will die soon.
34. If a piece of cloth is cut from the clothes of the married woman within a year, it is said that her husband will die soon.
35. Newly married girls are not allowed to sweep in the house. it is a bad omen.
36. When a bride enters the house a baby boy is given to her, a wish for ~~kk~~ her son.
37. A bride has to worship the sweepings the house, a sign of wealthy future life.
38. Wheat and rice are sprinkled over the bride when she enters her husband's house.
39. Water is spread on the way when the bride enters her husband's house.
40. The bride makes her finger prints at the wall by dipping her hand in the 'burmeric water', it is considered a good omen.
41. The girl should not be left alone during a few days before the marriage.

42. The girl is considered unlucky if some accident happens at the wedding day or just after the marriage.

43. The girl should sleep at the floor before marriage.

44. Seven inverted mud-plates are placed at the door; grass, leaves, rice, wheat, cereals, water and coconut these things are kept under each plate. These plates are crushed first by the ^{bride} groom and then bride walks on the crushed pieces. It is believed that wife will follow her husband in the future.

45. The bride wearing flowers should not be left alone.

46. After marriage a sweet dish is specially prepared by the bride which is considered a good sign.

47. When a bride enters her husband's house a black cat is borrowed from some where and covered with a basket, it is a good omen and believed that all the evils are closed in the basket.

48. Before going for the marriage ceremonies, ^{bride} groom has to wash his head with 'curd'. This ceremony is performed by the ladies only and it is considered a good omen.

49. The daughter-in-law is considered very unlucky if some incidents happen after her marriage. People connect those incidents to the girl and it is believed the girl has unlucky steps and is unlucky for their family.

50. A girl going to be married is not allowed to go alone anywhere.

51. The hairs of a bride are tied at the wedding day and the girl is not allowed to open her hairs till one month otherwise her husband will die.

52. A newly wedded girl should not be left alone.

53. People believe that inter-caste marriages are always unsuccessful.

54. Milk is kept on the fire so as when the bride enters the house she should see the boiling milk, it is believed that she will have a lot of money and will lead a happy life.

NEWLY BORN CHILD

55. Just after the birth, the child is given particles of gold along with honey for good health and fair complexion.

56. The mother and the child are untouchable for the first 21 days and are kept separate.

57. Mother and the child sleep on the floor for the first twenty days. Only after a puja mother and child are allowed to go out.

58. On the sixth day after child birth, six names are written on paper, then all the six pieces of paper are burnt. The name on the paper which burns out last becomes the name of the child.

59. After fifteen days of birth, the hairs of the child are removed and weighed with equal amount of gold, the cost of the gold is distributed among the poor people.

60. Child's father and his grand parents must see the child for the first time with some gold ornament.

CHILDREN IN GENERAL

61. If a girl is born after three sons she is considered very unlucky.
62. If a child is born and some one dies the child is considered unlucky.
63. If a child is born the family on someone's marriage day, the marriage and child both are considered lucky.
64. A black thread is tied around the waist of a child to save him from evil-eye.
65. A woman should not cut her nails and hairs on her son's birthday.
66. It is believed that if the nail of a lion and a copper coin and a coral are tied with a black thread around the waist of a child, that child will not fear at night, good for his health and also it protect the child from evil-eye.
67. If the small golden bells are tied with the thread then it is believed that no disease will come to that child.
68. Children are strictly told not to tell stories in the day time, the passengers will forget their way.
69. If a child sucks his thumb he is considered lucky.
70. Children are not allowed to go out in the afternoon, and are not allowed to play under the tamarind tree, it is believed that demons and witches used to live on the tamarind tree.

SOLAR AND LUNAR ECLIPSE

71. During the eclipse the leaves of holy basil plant are put in all eatables.

72 One should not eat anything till the eclipse.

ANIMALS

73. If a fox comes in the way of a person is a good sign.

74. If a person in his way met a cow and calf together, it is a good sign.

75. If a lizard happens to fall on the left shoulder it is an indication of the death or severe illness of that person.

76. If a black cat crosses the way the work will not be done, to avoid this evil one should throw his shoe on the way and can walk ahead.

77. If a bird called 'Tatin' cries one at night, it indicates that some one will die that night.

78. If a dog bites to a child a sacred thread is tied around the arm, it is believed that the poison will become uneffected.

79. If a crow sits on some one's head it is a very bad omen.

To drive away the evil it is said that one should have fire in an earthen pot and should run around the house seven times and must sit somewhere and weep.

80. If an owl screeches at night it is unlucky, it is believed that the place will be reunied.

81. If an owl picks up a child's cloth, it is believed that the child will die after some time.

82. A black cat is unlucky, it is believed that ghosts and spirits come in the form of black cats.

83. If a black cat crosses the way it is a bad omen.

84. Crying of cat is a bad sign, it is believed that the head of the family will die soon.

85. If a lizard happens to fall on the left hand it is a good sign.

86. It is not good to kill a spider, it is commonly believed among M Muslims.

87. If a crow cries it endicates some guests and letters.

MONTHLY PERIODS

88. No woman during her menstrual period is allowed to come at the place where wedding ceremonies are being performed.

89. A woman should not go out in the sun for four days during her periods.

90. A woman who has her monthly menstrual period can not visit a pregnant woman.

91. Among some families a woman during her menstrual period is considered unholy and she is not allowed to live with other family members, but for four or five days she used to live in a room outside the house.

92. A woman during her periods is not supposed to touch any thing, she is given her meals separately.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

93. The ceremony of taking a bride to her husband's house for the first time should not be performed on Thursday.

94. On Thursday one should not eat Lentil cereal it is believed that it causes illness.

95. Child born on Friday is considered to be very intelligent.

96. On the fourth lunar day small stones are thrown in the neighbouring houses to drive away the evils.

97. Tuesday and Thursday are unlucky days for marriage.

98. It is not good to kill a black cat and dog on Thursday.

99. The daughter-in-law should not go out for a journey during the five days of lunar month. It is considered a bad omen, it will cause the death of any member of the house or some other accident.

100. Thursday is unlucky for marriage.

101. Tuesday is unlucky to start a new work.

102. Thursday is not good for hunting because it is believed that spirits and ghosts come in form of animals.

103. It is unlucky to cut the nails and hairs on Friday.

COLOURS

104. Blue and black colours are unlucky.

105. If some neighbour sent a white dish one should not eat it as such, first a small amount is thrown on the floor then the rest can be eaten.

GOING OUT OF HOUSES & JOURNEY

106. Journey on Wednesday is unlucky.
107. It is a good sign to eat curd while starting for the journey.
108. One should not call a person from his back, it is believe that he will not be successful in his work.
109. If husband and wife going together and a dead body is passed by the right side of husband or by the left side of the wife, it is a good sign.
110. One should not ask a person going out of the house.
111. A pitcher full of water is placed at the door when some one goes out for a journey, and it is broken and the water is spread as soon as the person leaves the house.
112. It is a good sign to give a fish to a person going for a long journey.
113. While going out one should not see a window.
114. While going out for a journey if some one meets an oilman, it is a bad sign.
115. It is unlucky if someone met a waterman with an empty bag in his way.
116. While starting for a journey it is good to eat fish, surd and drink water.
117. It is a bad sign if someone interrogates while going out of the house.
118. If some one goes for a journey no member of the family takes bath on the same day.
119. One should not drink water in the empty stomach while going out of the house.

NIGHT

120. One should not look into the mirror at night.

121. One should not stitch a whistle at night. It is believed that snakes come out of their holes if someone whistles at night.

122. It is unlucky to sweep out a room at night or to throw sweepings into the street after sunset.

123. Unmarried girls are not allowed to walk bare headed under the trees at night.

124. One should have fire while passing a graveyard at night otherwise it is believed that ghosts and spirits will harm the person.

125. Girls are not supposed to wear flowers at night.

126. One should not look into the mirror after evening prayers

127. Unmarried girls are not supposed to walk under the trees after sunset, bare-headed.

TIMES OF THE DAY

128. No one should take the sweets in the day at 12'0 clock.

129. One should not pray at 12 O'Clock.

130. A child should not swiney in the afternoon.

131. One should not drink milk in the moonlight.

EPIDEMICS AND DISEASES

132. Some people believe that illness is not due to any disease but due to some angry evils, ghosts or demons which come to the person. For this purpose there are magicians which cure those people.

133. Most of the old ladies believe in 'evil-eye', and the just remedy for the illness of a child is to perform some ceremonies to protect the child from evil-eye.

134. It is believed that the 'night blindness' is incurable, but can be cured by giving some particular leaves and roots of some plants.

135. There are some magicians known as 'Ojha' (Wizard) who drive away the evil spirits by witchcraft and it is believed that the person is cured from the disease.

136. If a child has fever continuously for a month or two, the child is given a cold bath under a holy fig tree, because it is believed that gods live on the fig tree, they become happy and the child is cured.

137. Mostly it is believed that 'small-pox' is not a disease, it is said that when a goddess become angry she comes to punish the person. And to make the 'Devi' happy some prayers and ceremonies are performed.

138. Howling of dogs and cats is the sign of epidemic.

139. A flock of birds flying in the sky indicates some danger or epidemic.

140. During the epidemics one should not open the door untill it is knocked three times.

141. During the epidemics the wheat is borrowed from all the neighbouring houses it is then grinded and cooked and distributed among the innocent children.

142. The person who grinds the condiments should wash the slab otherwise he or she will suffer from the backache.

DEATH OR DEAD PERSONS

143. When a Hindu dies he is burned and this ceremony is performed by his eldest son or eldest nephew, after that it is necessary that the bones should be collected by the same person, if some one else will do this it is not good for him as well as for his whole family.

144. No marriage ceremony should be celebrated in the family till one year after the death of any family member.

145. It is believed among some Hindu that if a woman dies whose husband is alive, she should be decorated with gold and silver ornaments and with beautiful clothes, the body is burned with ~~in~~ clothes as such and the ornaments are taken off

146. The woman is considered lucky who dies before her husband it is believed that her soul will be in peace.

147. The things belonging to a dead person are not used by the other members of the family.

148. A woman should not visit a house with her child, where the death of a child of the same age has occurred.

149. It is lucky for a person to see a dead body while going any special work.

150. If some one dies after a long period of illness the members of the family are not supposed to use the articles which belong to the dead.

RAIN, THUNDER AND STORM

151. Among the farmers it is believed that if there is no rain, a sacrifice is offered to the god of rain, and it is believed that there will be rain and good crop.

152. When it is heavy rain and thunder it is believed that if the broom (Jharu) is kept under the slab of stone the rain will stop.

153. The rain, thunder and storm ceases down if the innocent girls take the rain water in ~~xxx~~ small earthen cups and keep them inside the hearth.

154. When it is heavy rain and thunder a doll is made with a piece of cloth its face is painted black and it is burnt with its head downwards. By doing so the storm is stopped.

155. If a pot full of water is placed on a wooden board in the centre of a courtyard it is believed that there will be ~~no rain on that day.~~

156. If a brass pot is burried under the ground filled with water, there will be no storm and heavy rain.

157. First born child should not go out in rain and thunder.

WIDOWS

158. A widow is not allowed to begin any work during the marriage ceremonies.

159. While going out one should not see a widow.

160. The fourth husband of a widow will die soon after his marriage.

MONTHS OF THE YEAR

161. It is believed that bedsteads are not woven during the month of 'Savan' because snakes climb on them.

162. According to Muslims marriage should not be celebrated in the months: Rajab and Shaban.

CHILDREN WOMAN & DEATH OF A CHILD

163. If a childless woman put some gold inside the balls made up of wet wheat flour, and those balls are worshiped by the woman, it is believed that she will have a son.

164. A woman whose children do not live long, if she place her new born child in a winnowing basket (supra) and drang it on the floor, it is believed that the child will have a long life.

165. Special care is taken for the first born child, it is believed that if an owl takes away the clothes of first born child, he will die after some time.

SPOTS ON THE BODY

166. A child born with a red spot is considered very lucky.

167. A child born with a black spot at the back is unlucky.

168. A child born with a teeth is a devil.

169. A person with black tongue should not curse anybody.

170. A black earthen pot with white spots is hanged at the door before entering a new house.

171. A black cloth is tied at the corner of the door before entering the new house.

172. Before entering the new house, the door decorated with mango leaves. It is a good omen.

173. Prayers and ritualistic ceremonies are performed before entering a newly constructed house.

WELLS

174. One should not peep in a dry well if it is at a lonely place.

STRANGERS

175. The used clothes should not be given to the strangers.

176. If a stranger comes to take the fire and lit something from the lamp, the lamp is extinguished first and again lit by the same fire.

177. To give fire to some stranger is a bad omen.

178. No stranger is allowed to visit a woman given birth to a child, for forty days.

DREAMS

179. If a person dreams foat, horse or a camel it indicates that the person will be murdered.

180. If someone dreams an elephant that means that he has a strong ~~evening~~. enemy.

181. Eggs in the dream is a bad sign.

182. Water in the dream is lucky.

183. If some one dreams a dead body that means the person will live long.

184. If some dreams that a snake has bitten him, it indicates that he would be harmed by his enemy.

185. To dream of losing a tooth foretells the death of a friend.

TABLE #1

Categories	1 Dreams	2 Stranger	3 New House	4 Spots on the Body	Total
	7	3	4	4	
	5 Children Woman/Dea th of Child	6 Months of the Year	7 Widows	8 Rain/thunder storm	33
	3	3	3	7	
Categories	9 Death/ Dead Per- sons	10 Epidemics/ Diseases	11 Times of the Day	12 Night	
	8	11	4	8	
	13 Going out of House/ Journey	14 Colours	15 Days of the week	16 Monthly Periods	
	14	2	11	5	63

TABLE- 1 b.

Categories	17 Animals	18 Eclipses	19 Children in General	20 New Born Child	
	15	2	10	6	
Categories	21 Marriage	22 Pregnancy	23 Metals	24 Itching/Snee- zing and Spitting	
	24	12	2	6	
Categories	25 Washerman	26 Parts of the Body	27 Snakes	28 Wells	
	1	4	5	1	

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TABLE- 2.

Phenomenological Distribution of
Superstitions.

A. Pertaining Natural Phenomena.

Rain, Thunder, Storm, Times of the day, Night,
Colours, Animals, Eclipses, Metals, Snakes. (44)

B. Pertaining Human Body.

Spots on the Body, Death, Dead Persons, Monthly
Periods, Itching, Sneezing, Spitting, Parts
of Body. (27)

C. Pertaining Calender.

Months of the year, Days of the Week. (13).

D. Diseases.

Epidemics. (11)

E. Pertaining Newness.

Strangers, New Houses, Newly Bornchild. (13).

F. Pertaining Children.

Childless women, Death of child, Children in
general, Pregnancy. (25).

G. Pertaining Marriage.

Widows also. (27).

H. Pertaining Sleep.

Dreams (7).

I. Pertaining Journey. (14)

J. Pertaining Professions.

Washerman (2)

K. Pertaining Technology.

Wells. (1)

CHAPTER 4.

Superstitions Reclassified under Analytical Categories or Hidden Laws.

1. Superstitions governed by the Law of Mutual Attraction
(Like attracts like).
2. Superstitions governed by the Attraction of Opposites.
3. Superstitions which are Arbitrary.

Superstitions governed by the Law of Mutual
Attraction. (Like attracts like).

1. A pregnant woman should not kill a snake.
2. One member of a pair of snakes should not be killed, otherwise the other member will take the revenge.
3. One person should not see the other person with one eye otherwise both of them will have quarrel.
4. If the washer-man comes in the morning it is a bad omen, one would not get the food. whole the day.
5. When a person spits at another he takes over the others sins.
6. If a frog jumped over the womb of a pregnant woman, it is said that the child will be pale and unhealthy.
7. A pregnant woman is not allowed to to a house where death has occurred.
8. A pregnant woman should not kill a snake.
9. If an accident happens at the time of marriage that marriage is considered to be unsuccessful.
10. Giving fish to the bride when she comes first time to her husband's house is a good sign.
11. If a piece of cloth is cut from the clothes of the newly married woman, it is believed that her husband will die soon.
12. Newly married girls are not allowed to sweep in the house. It is a bad omen.
13. When a bride enters the house a baby boy is given to her, a wish for her son.

14. Water is spread on the way when a bride enters her husband's house.

15. The bride makes her finger prints at the wall by dipping her palm in the 'lurmeric water', it is considered a good sign.

16. The girl is considered unlucky if some accident happens at the wedding day or just after the marriage.

17. Seven inverted mud-plates are placed at the door, grass, leaves, rice, wheat, cereals, water and coconut, these things are kept under each plate. These plates are crushed first by the bride-groom and then bride walks on the crushed pieces. It is believed that wife will follow her husband in the future.

18. After marriage a sweet dish is specially prepared by the bride, which is considered a good sign.

19. The daughter-in-law is said to have unlucky steps and considered unlucky if some accident happens just after the marriage.

20. A newly wedded girl should not be left alone.

21. Milk is kept on the fire so as when the bride enters the house should see the boiling milk and it is believed that she will have a lot of money and will lead a happy life.

22. Just after the child birth, the child is given particles of gold along with honey for good health and fair complexion.

23. After fifteen days of birth, the hairs of the child are removed and weighed with equal amount of gold, the cost of the gold is distributed among the poor people.

24. Child's father and his grand parents must see the child for the first time with some gold ornament.
25. If a child is born and some one dies the child is considered unlucky.
26. If a child is born in the family on someone's marriage day, the marriage and child both are considered lucky.
27. A black thread is tied around the waist of child to save him from evil eye.
28. It is believed that if the nail of a lion, a copper coin and a coral are tied with a black thread around the waist of a child, that child will not fear at night, good for his health and also it protects the child.
29. If a child sucks his thumb he is considered lucky.
30. If a fox comes in the way of a person is a good sign.
31. If a lizard happens to fall on the left shoulder it is an indication of the death or severe illness of that person.
32. If a black cat crosses the way the work will not be done, to avoid this evil one should throw his shoe on the way and can walk ahead.
33. Crying of cat is a bad sign, it is believed that the head of the family will die soon.
34. The lizard and black cat are unlucky, because it is believed that ghosts and spirits come in the form of these animals.
35. No woman during her menstrual period is allowed to come at the place where wedding ceremonies are being performed.
36. It is not good to go for hunting on Thursday.
37. It is a bad sign if a black cat or dog is killed accidentally on Thursday.

38. If some neighbourer sent a white dish one should not eat it as such, first a small amount is thrown on the floor then the rest can be eaten.

39. It is good to eat curd while starting for the journey.

40. One should not dall a person from his back, it is believed that he will not be successful in his work.

41. A pitcher full of water is placed at the door when some one goes out for a journey, and it is broken and water is spread as soon as the person leaves the house.

42. It is a good sign to give a fish to a person going for a long journey.

43. It is unlucky to meet a water-man with an empty bag on the way.

44. While starting for a journey it is good to eat fish, curd and to drink water.

45. If some one leaves for a journey no member of the family should take a bath on the same day.

46. One should not drink water in the empty stomach while going out of the house.

47. One should not whistle at night it is believed that the snakes will come out of their holes.

48. Mostly it is believed that "Small pox" is not a disease, it is said that when a goddess become angry she comes to punish the person. And to make the 'devi' happy some prayers and ceremonies are performed.

49. Howling of dogs and cats is the sign of epidemic.

50. During the epidemics the wheat is borrowed from all the neighbouring houses it is then grinded, cooked and distributed among the innocent children.

51. The things belonging to a dead person are not used by the other members of the family.

52. A woman should not visit a house with her child where the death of a child of the same age has occurred.

53. If someone dies after a long period of illness the members of the family are not supposed to use the articles which belong to the dead.

54. If a brass pot is buried under the ground filled with water, there will be no storm and heavy rain.

55. A widow is not allowed to perform any of the ceremonies during marriage.

56. While going out one should not see a widow.

57. It is believed that bedsheets are not woven during the month of 'Sawan' because snakes climb on them.

58. If a childless woman put some gold inside the balls made up of wet wheat flour, and those balls are worshiped by the woman, it is believed that she will have a son.

59. A woman whose children do not live long, if she place her new born child in a winnowing basket (Supra) and drag it on the floor, it is believed that the child will have a long life.

60. Special care is taken for the first-born child, it is believed that if an owl takes away the clothes of first-born child, he will die after sometime.

61. A person with black tongue should not curse anybody.

62. Before entering the new house, the door is decorated with mango leaves, and it is believed a good omen.
63. Prayers and ritualistic ceremonies are performed before entering a newly constructed house.
64. To give fire to some stranger is a bad omen.
65. If a person dreams goat, horse or a camel it indicates that the person will be murdered.
66. If some one dreams an elephant that means he has a strong enemy.
67. If a person dreams that a snake has bitten him, it indicates that he would be harmed by his enemy.
68. To dream of losing a tooth foretells the death of a friend.
69. If a black cat crosses the way it is a sign of bad luck.
70. A flock of birds flying in the sky indicates some danger or epidemic.

Superstitions governed by the Attraction
of Opposites.

1. Instead of killing a black snake it is given milk and worshipped, because, people believe that some diety comes in the form of snake.
2. Girls should not pray with open and uncovered hairs.
3. An expectant mother is not allowed to go to a house where a child has been delivered recently.
4. Among Bengalis bride is allowed to see her husband on the next day of marriage. And it is believed that if she met her husband on the same day her husband will die soon.
5. A bride has to worship the sweepings of the house, a sign of wealthy future life.
6. The girl should sleep at the floor before marriage.
7. If husband and wife going together and a dead body is passed by the right side of husband or by the left side of the wife, it is a good sign.
8. Girls are not supposed to wear flowers at night.
9. No one should take the sweets in the day at twelve O'clock.
10. No marriage ceremony should be celebrated in the family till one year after the death of any family member.
11. It is lucky for a person to see a dead body while going for any important work. It is a sign of success.
12. If a pot full of water is placed on a wooden board in the centre of courtyard it is believed that there will be no rain on that day.

13. A black earthen pot with white spots is hunged at the door before entering a new house.

14. A black cloth is tied at the corner of the door before entering the new house.

15. If a person dreams a dead body that means the person will live long.

16. Unmarried girls are not allowed to walk bare-headed under the trees at night.

17. If the small golden bells are tied with a black thread around the waist of a child, then, it is believed that no disease will come to that child.

18. A girl and a boy before the marriage and during the marriage ceremonies wear some iron ornaments so as they are protected by the evils.

19. If a lizard happens to fall on the left hand it is a good sign.

20. Usually black spots are made on the faces of young children and the believe is that they are protected from the evil eye.

21. To drop a knife accidentally so that the point penetrates into the ground and it stands upright is a sign of a coming success.

22. To place an open knife near a sleeping child is considered a good omen.

23. To see a dangerous animal at an unexpected place indicates the finding of a treasure.

24. Dreaming of money is a sign of bad luck.

Superstitions which are Arbitrary

1. The snake never bites a pregnant woman, it is believed.
2. In very old houses snakes used to live, one should kill those snakes, because it is believed that these are the spirits of the ancestors.
3. One should not cut the nails at night and the cut nails should be buried deep away from the house.
4. If the left palm of a woman itches she will gain money.
5. Batting of the right eye is a bad sign.
6. Sneezing at the start of any work is a bad sign.
7. To sneeze three times in a rapid succession is considered a good omen.
8. The itching of the palm is considered an indication that the person will get some unexpected money.
9. A pregnant woman should not wear flowers as it is believed that ghosts and demons will come to her.
10. During the first pregnancy the woman is not allowed to visit a widow's house.
11. While it is solar or lunar eclipse, a pregnant woman should should not cut, sew or stitch or cook anything. And she must have a bath just after the eclipse.
12. During eclipse the corner of a cloth of the expectant is dyed in red-ochre. It is a sign of protection.
13. If a black thread is tied around the waist of an expectant woman it is believed that son will be born to her.

14. Special care is taken for the clothes, nails and hairs of an expectant woman during her first-pregnancy.
15. Wheat and rice are sprinkled over the bride when she enters her husband's house.
16. The girl should not be left alone during a few days before the marriage.
17. The bride wearing flowers should not be left alone.
18. When a bride enters her husband's house a black cat is covered with a basket, it is believed that all the evils are closed in the basket.
19. Before going for the marriage ceremonies, bridesgroom has to wash his head with 'curd'. This ceremony is performed by the ladies only and it is considered a good omen.
20. The hairs of a bride are tied at the wedding day and the girl is not allowed to open her hairs till one month otherwise her husband will die.
21. The mother and new born child are untouchable for the first twenty-one days and are kept separate.
22. Mother and the child sleep on the floor for the first twenty days, only after a puja mother and child are allowed to go out.
23. On the sixth day after child birth, six names are written on paper, then all the six pieces of paper are burnt. The name on the paper which burns out last becomes the name of the child.
24. If a girl is born after three sons she is considered very unlucky.
25. A woman should not cut her nails and hairs on her son's birthday.

26. Children are strictly told not to tell stories in the day time, the passengers will forget their ways.

27. Children are not allowed to go out in the afternoon, and are not allowed to play under the 'tamarind' tree, it is believed that demons and witches used to live on the tamarind tree.

28. During the eclipse the leaves of holy basil plant are put in all eatables.

29. If a dog bites to a child a sacred thread is tied around the arm, it is believed that the poison will become uneffected.

30. If a crow sits on someone's head it is a very bad omen. To drive away the evil it is said that one should have fire in an earthen pot and run around the house seven times and must sit some where and weep.

31. If a lizard happens to fall on the left hand it is a good sign.

32. It is not good to kill a spider, commonly believed among muslims.

33. If a crow cries it indicates some guests and letters.

34. A woman should not go out in the sun for four days during her monthly periods.

35. A woman who has her menstrual period can not visit a pregnant woman.

36. Among some families a woman during her menstrual period is considered unholy and she is not allowed to live with other family members, for four or five days she used to live in a room outside the house.

37. A woman during her periods is not supposed to touch anything she is given her meals separately.

38. The ceremony of taking a bride to her husband's house for the first time should not be performed on Thursday.

39. On Thursday one should not eat Lentil cereal it causes illness.

40. Child born on Friday is considered to be very ~~it~~ intelligent

41. On the fourth lunar day small stones are thrown in the neighbouring houses to drive away the evils.

42. The daughter-in-law should not go out for a journey during the five days of lunar month. It is considered a bad omen, it will cause the death of any member of the house or some other accident.

43. Thursday is unlucky for marriage .

44. Tuesday is unlucky to start a new work.

45. It is not good to cut nails and hairs on Friday.

46. Blue and black colours are unlucky.

47. Journey on Wednesday is unlucky.

48. One should not ask any thing to a person going out of the house.

49. While going out one should not see a widow.

50. While going out for a journey if some one meets an oil-man, it is a bad sign.

51. It is a bad sign if some one is interrogated while going out of the house.

52. One should not look into the mirror at night.

53. It is not a good sign to sweep out a room at night or to throw sweepings into the street after sun-set.

54. One should not look into the mirror after evening prayers.

55. One should not pray at twelve O'clock.

56. A child should not swing in the afternoon.

57. One should not drink milk in the moonlight.

58. During the epidemics one should not open the door until it is knocked three times.

59. The person who grinds the condiments should wash the slab, otherwise he or she will suffer from the backache.

60. Some people believe that illness is not due to any disease, but due to some angry evils, ghosts or demons which come to the person. For this purpose there are magicians which cure those people.

61. Most of the old ladies believe in evil-eye', and the first remedy for the illness of a child is to perform some ceremonies to protect the child from evil-eye.

62. It is believed that the 'night blindness' is incurable, but can be cured by giving some particular leaves and roots of some plants.

63. There are some magicians known as 'Ojha' (Wizard) who drive away the evil spirits by witch craft and it is believed that the person is cured from the disease.

64. If a child has fever continuously for a month or two, the child is given a cold bath under a holy fig tree, because it is believed that gods live on the fig tree, they become happy and the child is cured.

65. Mostly it is believed that "small pox" is not a disease, it is said that when

65. When a hindu dies he is burned and this ceremony is performed by his eldest son or eldest nephew, after that it is necessary that the bones should be collected by the same person if some one else will do this it is not good for him as well as for his whole family.

66. Among Hindus if a woman dies whose husband is alive is considered very lucky, she is decorated with gold and silver ornaments and with beautiful clothes, the body is burned with clothes as such and the ornaments are taken off.

67. When it is heavy rain and thunder it is believed that if the broom (Jharu) is kept under the slab of stone the rain will stop.

68. The rain, thunder and storm ceases down if the innocent girls take the rain water in small earthen sups and keep them inside the earth.

69. When it is heavy rain and thunder a doll is made with a piece of cloth its face is painted black and its is burnt with its head downwards. By doing so the storm is stopped.

70. The first born child should not go out in rain and thunder.

71. The fourth husband of a widow will die soon after his marriage.

72. According to Muslims marriage should not be celebrated in the months Rajabs and Shaban.

73. A child born with a red spot is considered very lucky.

74. A child born with a black spot at the back is unlucky.

75. A child born with a tooth is a devil.

76. One should not peep in a dry well if it is at a lonely place.

77. The used clothes should not be given to the strangers.

78. If a stranger comes to take the fire and lit something from the lamp, the lamp, the lamp is estinguished first and again li by the same fire.

79. No stranger is allowed to visit a woman given birth to a child for fourty days.

80. Eggs in the dream is a bad sign.

81. Water in the dream is lucky.

82. The girls should spit on their cut nails and hairs to make them dirty, and it is believed that they become useless for magic.

83. A girl during her marriage ceremonies should keep an iron knife because it is believed that she will remain out of danger

84. The woman is considered lucky who dies before her husband, it is believed that her soul will be in peace.

85. An expectant woman is not allowed to go out after dark as it believed that the ghosts might be lurking around.

86. A pregnant woman should not p travel by boat or cross a river.

87. A girl going to be married is not allowed to go alone anywhere.

88. If a person in his way meet a cow and calf together, it is a good sign.

89. If an owl picks up a child's cloth, it is believed that the child will die after some time.

90. One should have fire while passing a graveyard at night, otherwise, it is believed that ghosts and spirits will harm the

TABLE No. 3.

Superstitions under Analytical Categories

1. Governed by Law of Attraction of Likes --- 70.
2. Governed by Law of Attraction of Opposites -- 24.
3. Superstitions which are Arbitrary --- 90.

Total ---- 184.

CHAPTER - 5

Conclusion.

Table (1) at the close of the third chapter brings out the following significant facts:-

1. Most superstitions seem to centre around (if we take the first five) marriage, animals, journey, pregnancy, days of the week (and diseases).

Table No. 2. reflects the following :-

2. If superstitions could be regarded as an index of perception of phenomena, the most perceived phenomena are (i) the natural phenomena, (ii) marriage (iii) human body, (iv) children, and (v) travelling.

Table No. 3 at the end of the 4th chapter brings out the following facts:-

3. The law of 'like attracts like' seems to be more predominant in the Indian superstitions than the law of the attraction of 'opposites'.

4. The superstitions where inner law is not clear and are therefore designated as arbitrary almost number fifty percent of the total number of the superstitions recorded in this study. The arbitrariness seems however to be a reference to the totality of certain customs and beliefs in the Indian culture complex. The so called arbitrary superstitions might belong more meaningfully to the social whole. Their laws should be discovered not in thier structure but beyond in the cultural matrix of which they are a part.

APPENDIX No-1.

Names and addresses of women interviewed with their ages.

- | | | |
|---|------|-----------|
| 1. Mrs Vidya Sharma
Vijay Bhawan,
Vishnupuri,
Aligarh. | ---- | 62 years |
| 2. Mrs Sarla Devi
House No. 9,
Railway Colony,
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 59 years. |
| 3. Mrs Khadija Begum
Pathan Mohalla,
Aligarh. | ---- | 65 years. |
| 4. Mrs Jamila Bano
Jeevangarh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 61 years. |
| 5. Mrs Mubeen Fatima
Rabia Manzil,
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 68 years. |
| 6. Mrs Waheedan
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 58 years. |
| 7. Mrs Meera Sharma
House No. 27.
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 59 years. |
| 8. Mrs P.C. Banerjee
Summer Lodge,
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 60 years. |

- | | | |
|--|------|-----------|
| 9. Mrs Krishna Banerjee
Swastik Bhawan,
Marria Road,
Aligarh. | ---- | 63 years. |
| 10. Mrs Rajkumari Devi
House No. 21,
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 66 years. |
| 11. Mrs Qawar Jahan
Qamar Lodge,
Sir Syed Nagar,
Aligarh. | ---- | 60 years. |
| 12. Mrs Rabia Sultan
Rabia Manzil,
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 65 years. |
| 13. Mrs Masuma Begum
Shyam-Niwas,
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 63 years. |
| 14. Mrs Nisar Bano
Tar Banglow,
Aligarh. | ---- | 61 years. |
| 15. Mrs Phoolwati
Servant Quarters,
Rabia Manzil,
Badar Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 53 years. |
| 16. Mrs Asghari Jahan
Sahab Bagh,
Aligarh. | ---- | 57 years. |
| 17. Mrs Nafees Fatima
Dodhpur
Aligarh. | ---- | 65 years. |

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